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CULVER CITY LAND USE

THE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

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THE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Section 65302(a) of the Government Code of the State of California requires a General Plan to include "a land use element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, ...education, public buildings and grounds,...and other categories of public and private uses of the land."

This Land Use Element constitutes only one part of the General Plan of Culver City. Many specific aspects of land use and development are dealt with in other General Plan elements which are designed to support and compliment each other. In particular, those elements specifically concerned with land uses include the Circulation Element, the Scenic Routes Plan (the Scenic Highway Element), the Recreation Element, and the Open Space Element. As a result, this Land Use Element does not address these aspects of land use with any detail or specificity comparable to that in each of the other individual elements. Additionally the Seismic Safety Element and the Noise Element of the General Plan contain certain data and criteria that can affect the location and building design for future developments.

The 1976 Land Use Element supersedes that chapter of the 1974 Revised General Plan entitled "Land Use Element."

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II. PURPOSE

The General Plan and its component elements are a general statement of long range goals and policies relating to the future physical, economic, and social development of the community. Future land uses are not precisely located with respect to individual properties as is the case with a zoning map. This is necessary to allow latitude in making specific short term day-to-day decisions, which are necessary for plan implementation. It is impossible to determine the location of all land uses in advance of need and development. Therefore, "Development Policies" are the basis of the plan.

The Land Use Element is a plan for anticipated full development. A precise date for completion of full development cannot be indicated, of course, because growth rates cannot be predicted accurately and there will inevitably be future changes to the plan. Since the plan is for a dynamic community, it is imperative that it not become static. The plan must be continually reevaluated against the concepts and goals of the community. As a policy statement, the plan guides future development towards the achievement of community goals.

The pattern of land use in Culver City has developed sporadically and seemingly almost haphazardly -- a growth which, until recently, has not been coordinated in terms of overall implication for the entire community. Rather than beginning as a nucleus and spreading from the center to the extremities, Culver City began as a strip and, within ten years after cityhood, spread seven and one-half miles in length along Washington Boulevard. The result of annexations along this strip and the subsequent development has been a proliferation of undersized commercial properties and buildings deficient in parking areas and amenities. For these reasons such strip commercial development has also had a detrimental effect on the residential properties which abut the strip.

Another existing land use pattern which has developed over the years and as a result fostered discomfort among the City as a whole, has been the close proximity of residential and industrial uses. The industrial uses which presently are causing problems have often pre-dated the residential developments. However, prior existence does not lessen any of the deleterious impacts for the residents who were not initially responsible for the proximity of the residential to the industrial uses. Additionally, the commercial and industrial uses that occurred in these areas several decades ago, when the abutting residential areas were developed, have since significantly changed and increased in intensity of industrial activity.

A third major land use pattern which has resulted in problems has been the mixture of varying types of residential uses in a given area. Initially, this pattern developed as a result of the lack of zoning in the City before 1937, and was aided after the adoption of zoning through the continual granting of variances for otherwise nonconforming uses and "spot" zone changes. Until 1961, the City lacked a General Plan, and therefore, lacked known guidelines for such requests. By the time of adoption of the 1961 General Plan, the mixture of types of residential uses had progressed to its present state. Several aspects of this mixed use problem can and have been (through recent amendments) ameliorated by the zoning regulations of the Municipal Code. However, a general guideline for the future is needed in this area and can be provided through the implementation of this element of the General Plan.

In terms of existing land use patterns, another situation which developed over the years and resulted in certain problems has been the proliferation of "legal nonconforming uses." These uses were established legally under the laws in effect at the time the uses began. However, over the years the laws have changed and, as a result, the uses are not in conformity with existing laws. The question of balance between the right of a use which had been legally started to continue and the right of the City to regulate existing uses in terms of current laws is a difficult one.

As is the case with many cities in their second fifty years, Culver City is experiencing certain problems of aging. Structures and facilities built under less-demanding building codes are beginning to show the effects of minimal construction. Sub-division practices designed to meet the situations prevalent during the 1920's are no longer applicable to the needs of the 1970's. Misuse of land over a period of years has resulted in a loss of economic potential for both the landowner and the City as a whole. As a result, it has been found and declared that there exist within the City areas of blight which constitute either social or economic liabilities - or both - requiring re-development in the interest of health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the City. These blighted areas are characterized by one or more of the following conditions as defined by the State of California.

1. Defective design and character of physical construction.
2. Faulty interior arrangement and exterior spacing.
3. High-density population and overcrowding.
4. Inadequate provision for light, ventilation, sanitation, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

5. Age, obsolescence, deterioration, dilapidation, mixed character or shift of uses.
6. An economic dislocation, deterioration, or disuse resulting from faulty planning.
7. The subdividing and sale of lots of irregular form and shape and irregular size for proper usefulness and development.
8. The laying out of lots in disregard of contours and other physical characteristics of the ground and surrounding conditions.
9. The existence of inadequate streets, open spaces, and utilities.
10. The existence of lots or other areas which are subject to being inundated by water.
11. A prevalence of depreciated values, impaired investments, and social and economical adjustments to such an extent that the capacity to pay taxes is reduced, and tax receipts inadequate for the cost of public services rendered.
12. In some parts of the blighted area, a growing or total lack of proper utilization of facilities, resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable for contributing to the public health, safety, and welfare.
13. In other parts of the blighted area, a loss of population and reduction of proper utilization of the area, resulting in its further deterioration and added costs to the taxpayer for the creation of new public facilities and services elsewhere.

The existence of blighted areas characterized by any or all of such conditions constitutes a serious and growing menace which is condemned as injurious and inimical to the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of the City.

Adoption and subsequent implementation of the various elements of the General Plan, using the tools and resources available to the City for such purpose, is a method by which the blighted areas of the City can be re-developed in a productive manner.

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III. STANDARDS

The Plan utilizes eight basic land use categories: One And Two Unit Residential, Multiple Unit Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Cemetery, Institutional, Studio, and Park And Open Spaces. The chart which follows sets forth the standards for these land use categories, and the proposed land use plan illustrates the proposed land uses for the area of the City.

The residential categories are expressed both in terms of the type of residential structure (i.e., single-family houses and duplexes versus multiple unit apartment and condominium buildings) and the allowable densities. The differentiation between such potentially diverse residential environments permits planning for possible increase demands for City services, schools and utilities.

Standards for the commercial land use exclude both residential and industrial uses from this category. By creating an exclusively commercial category, the viability of the commercial developments in this category will increase, and a better relationship between the various commercial facilities in a particular area will emerge.

Similarly, the industrial category is designed to exclude major non-industrial uses. Certain accessory commercial uses are integral parts of industrial operations, and, as such, will continue to be permitted as accessory uses. (In limited instances, residential uses of a caretaker or watchman nature are also permitted with appropriate permits and controls.)

Presently institutional and park and open space uses are permitted and located within a variety of land use areas in the City. The specialized nature of these uses makes their classification as either commercial or industrial difficult. Therefore, such uses, which almost always require specialized types of buildings not easily convertible to other uses, are set forth separately in the plan. Since each type of such use has specialized problems and different impacts on surrounding uses, each such new use should be established with a permit in which the controls necessary for harmonious inter-relationships can be established.

Cemetery uses are designed to officially acknowledge the two existing cemeteries in the City. The studio use slated to remain is a specialized land use in keeping with its specialized studio zoning classification.

Additionally, there are possible transitional uses not specifically designated that can occur in areas where two different land uses abut each other. Such possible uses include landscaped buffer areas to minimize any adverse visual or physical impact of one use upon another, the strictly regulated and limited interior of parking lot expansions for existing strip commercial areas into residential areas, and other utility and institutional uses. Isolated parcels of land within freeway rights-of-way may also be utilized for certain restricted uses that would not have any adverse effect upon abutting private property. The establishment of buffer areas between the residential and industrial areas in the eastern part of the City and along the Ballona Creek are already an adopted policy of the General Plan.

CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION

CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION

ONE AND TWO UNIT RESIDENTIAL

Residential developments ranging in density from zero units per net acre in hillside areas to a maximum of 17 units per net acre in level areas and limited to one or two residential units per residential lot.

Existing viable low density areas of this type to be preserved and protected.
Market demand for new areas.
Hillside development to be compatible with existing terrain.
Land free from earthquake faults, slides, flood, or excessive erosion hazard.
Location environmentally suitable for homesites.
Areas of one-family, two-family, condominiums, and cluster housing developments are to be encouraged to comply with adopted goals for the City.

MULTIPLE UNIT RESIDENTIAL

Residential developments having a density of 15 or more units per net acre and permitting three or more residential units per residential lot.

(Land may be developed at a lower density by the property owner)

Existing viable areas of this type to remain.
Market demand for new areas.
Proximity to major streets.
Adequate utility service available.
Adequate sanitary sewer service available.
Land free from earthquake faults, slides, flood, or excessive erosion hazard.
Location environmentally suitable for multiple-family development.

COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood community and regional shopping centers, highway and marina oriented commercial, wholesale, service, and office uses.

Existing viable commercial areas to remain.
Size consistent with market demand.
Location conducive to convenient access.
Adequate utility and sanitary sewer service available.
Relatively level hazard-free locations suitable for heavy building sites.

CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION

CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION

CEMETERY

The two cemeteries in the City

Both cemeteries exist as such under state law. No contiguous land exists for possible expansion.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial activities involving manufacturing, processing, assembling, warehousing, trucking, and industrial park activities.

Existing viable industrial areas to remain.
Compatibility with surrounding areas.
Proximity to major transportation routes.
Adequate buffer to minimize negative impact on other surrounding land uses.
Level, hazard-free land suitable for heavy building sites.
Adequate utility and sanitary sewer service available.

STUDIO

40 acres of MGM Studio

Recognition of existing use.
No new facilities planned.

INSTITUTIONAL and
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Public buildings and facilities, schools, parks, utility sites, and other community facilities

Existing viable facilities to remain.
New facilities to be located to serve future needs of the community.
Recreation facilities development to be consistent with the recreation element.
Sanitary sewer facilities to be consistent with the sanitary sewer master plan.
Development of new facilities in Hillside areas to be compatible with existing terrain.
Location of new facilities to be environmentally suitable for proposed use.
Land to be suitable for facility.

UTILITY

Major water and electrical distribution facilities

Recognition of existing uses.

IV. LAND USE PATTERN

OFFICIAL LAND USE ELEMENT MAP

Implications of the Land Uses proposed for the City in terms of percentages devoted to each Land Use are as follows. This plan basically is a program for improving the environment of the existing basic land uses. This plan does not propose radical changes other than the conversion of certain studio properties to other uses.

WITHIN EXISTING CITY BOUNDARIES:

<u>USE</u>	<u>1976 EXISTING</u>	<u>1985 PROPOSED</u>
ONE & TWO UNIT RESIDENTIAL	37%	34% **
MULTIPLE UNIT RESIDENTIAL	10	13
COMMERCIAL	16	22
INDUSTRIAL	9	10
STUDIO	4	2
CEMETERY	3	3
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE	1	6
INSTITUTIONAL	3	3
MISCELLANEOUS *	5	7
OIL EXTRACTION	3	0
VACANT	9	0

The officially adopted Land Use Element Map which follows is the document by which all land use evaluations or decisions shall be determined.

* Includes freeway interchange and creek land.

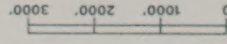
** This reduction reflects the anticipated replacement of existing single family homes and duplexes in the R-3 and R-4 zone with multiple unit residential buildings.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

There are several basic methods to implement the various aspects and proposals of this Land Use Element and the other related elements of the General Plan. Often more than one of the methods may be considered and more than one may be utilized together. These basic methodologies are discussed below:

1. Land Development Regulations: Land Development regulations consist of the laws governing the use and subdivision of land. The most important tool to implement a general plan is zoning. Unfortunately, zoning is often looked upon as a panacea for all discrepancies between existing and proposed land uses.
2. Specific Plans: State law permits cities, after adoption of the General Plan, to prepare supplemental specific plans for sub-areas (or planning districts) within the City. These specific plans can be approved and adopted in the same manner as the General Plan and thereafter be used by the City as a development guideline and control on future zone changes.
3. Fiscal Expenditures: The expenditures of monies by the City on Public Works or Recreation projects can serve as a catalyst to a slowly developing area. Expenditures can be timed to coincide with major private developments in an area and result in an improvement of public facilities complimentary to the private development and thus enhance the entire area. Care must be exercised in these expenditures in order that the proposed improvements and the proposed future use of the area correlate with each other.
4. Redevelopment Agency: Utilization of the powers of Redevelopment (per the state's Health and safety Code) offers a more direct and often a faster method of causing a desired change to occur. Culver City has a Redevelopment Agency and therefore has the necessary tools for such activity. The effective use of a redevelopment agency takes a great deal of time and energy and use of specialized talents.
5. Joint Powers: Many aspects of the plan involve government jurisdictions other than the City of Culver City. In order to accomplish the translation of these policies into reality, inter-government cooperation is a necessity at all levels of the governmental hierarchy.

The actual methodology most appropriate for implementing a given aspect or proposal of the Plan, and the priority that it should be given relative to the other proposals, are matters generally decided by the Planning Commission, the City Council, and the Redevelopment Agency. However, community participation in aiding these governmental agencies in their decision making shall continue to be a major means of implementing the proposals of the plan.



ONE & TWO UNIT RESIDENTIAL	
MULTIPLE UNIT RESIDENTIAL	
COMMERCIAL	
INDUSTRIAL	
PARKS & OPEN SPACE	
CEMETERY	
STUDIO	MGM
INSTITUTIONAL	*
SCHOOL	S
UTILITY	•



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